

Happy New Year
2009

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NEWSLETTER

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UNVs initiate street cleaning campaign in Kathmandu



UN Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. Robert Piper cleaning Bagbazar street on the occasion of International Volunteer Day on 5 December 2008. Photo: UNIC



UN Resident & Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. Robert Piper addressing UNV activists on International Volunteer Day. Photo: UNIC

Happy New Year 2009
From UNIC Family



Kathmandu, 5 December: A Street cleaning campaign took place with a specific purpose to raise awareness of environmental issues as well as of the importance of volunteerism.

More than 300 volunteers gathered in front of PK Campus, Bagbazaar at 7:30 am. Cleaning started with the opening remark of UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Mr. Robert Piper.

Volunteers, including Mr. Robert Piper, moved along the street sweeping away garbage from Bagbazaar to Ratnapark. Thanks to the collaboration among all the participants and the supporters, the busy streets of the capital city were free of garbage.

On behalf of UNV Nepal, UNV Programme Officer for UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN),

Mr. Karma Loday conveyed the special message for this day from the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. UNV Programme Officer Christian Simmelkier expressed thanks to all the participants and the supporting organizations.

The campaign ended with the closing remark by a representative of Volunteer Sending Agencies, the organiser of this event.

5th of December is the International Volunteers Day (IVD) to highlight the importance of volunteerism celebrated every year around the world. This year UNV Nepal organized various events to commemorate the special day.



International Volunteer Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly through Resolution 40/212 on 17 December 1985.



Participants in UDHR60 Film Festival held at the Russian Cultural Centre from 1-5 December 2008
Photo: UNIC

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The UDHR is considered the first universal statement on the basic principles of human rights, based on the universal principles of justice, fairness and equality. It endures 60 years after it was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly because it is the one document that concisely lays out the fundamental human rights of all persons everywhere. The UDHR has inspired more than 60 human rights 'instruments' that, together, have created an international standard of human rights. It has been translated into more than 330 languages.

KATHMANDU, 1 December: United Nations agencies and their partners launched UDHR60 in Kathmandu on 1 December 2008, a week-long programme to mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

The programme began with the inauguration of the UDHR60 Film Festival at the Russian Cultural Centre, by H.E. Gilles-Henry Garault, Ambassador of France to Nepal. Also speaking was Richard Bennett, Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Festival began with a showing of Maina, the film made about the arrest and killing of Maina Sunuwar, in the custody of the

then Royal Nepalese Army in 2004.. The event continued with each day devoted to a specific theme, including forced displacement, women's rights, child rights, and ending impunity for human rights violations.

UNIC also participated in this event by distribution relevant materials on Human Rights and by putting up posters on the theme.

A photo exhibition A l'épreuve du monde was also held at the Russian Cultural Centre until 5 December and at the UDHR60 in Kathmandu concert at Basantapur Durbar Square on 6 December.



UNIC distributing relevant materials on Human Rights.
Photo: UNIC



A photo exhibition A l'épreuve du monde at the Russian Cultural Centre.
Photo: UNIC



Prof. S. James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples.
Photo: UNIC

KATHMANDU, 2 December: "This is a critical moment to respond to the many challenges that indigenous peoples of Nepal face," said Professor S. James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on indigenous peoples, as he concluded his nine-day visit to Nepal. "While I am encouraged by expressions of commitment by the

Government of Nepal to advance the rights of indigenous peoples, much needs to be done."

Prof. S. James Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. Prof. S. James Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people.

The Special Rapporteur, who expressed his appreciation for the Government's cooperation during all phases of his visit, met in Kathmandu with government officials, representatives of indigenous peoples' (adivasi janajati) organizations, members of civil society, and various representatives of the United Nations. In his visits to the districts of Ilam, Jhapa, Chitwan and Kailali, the UN expert consulted with indigenous communities and local authorities.

Professor Anaya observed with satisfaction the Government of Nepal's commitment to international standards upholding the rights of indigenous peoples, in particular its ratification of ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples and its support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Nepal is the first Asian country to ratify the convention, which commits States to securing indigenous peoples' distinct cultures and ways of life, rights over lands and natural resources, as well as the right to meaningfully participate in all decisions affecting them.

During his visit, the Special Rapporteur was informed of a number of positive measures being planned for the benefit of indigenous communities, both in the framework of the constitution-making process and the implementation of ILO

Convention 169. Professor Anaya noted, however, that these measures needed to be consolidated and better focused to not just uplift the economic and social conditions of indigenous peoples, but also to secure their survival as distinct communities within a genuinely multicultural political and social order.

"A long history of oppression and marginalization has excluded indigenous peoples from political representation and decision-making, full citizenship, and economic and educational opportunities; and their distinct cultures and languages have been continuously threatened," the UN expert said.

"Indigenous communities have been forcibly displaced from their ancestral lands and denied property rights, and they often lack access to justice. Indigenous women have suffered additional forms of discrimination and abuse," he added.

The Special Rapporteur was encouraged to learn that these conditions are being addressed in the ongoing constitution-making process. "It is critical to secure the rights of indigenous peoples in the new constitution and to include these peoples in the process leading to a new constitution," he stated.

While noting that a significant number of members of the Constituent Assembly belong to indigenous communities, Professor Anaya emphasized the need to develop additional mechanisms in the constitution-making process to consult directly with indigenous peoples, through their own chosen representatives and in accordance with their own methods of decision-making, as required by the international standards to which Nepal has committed.

Professor Anaya noted several other pressing matters that should be addressed immediately. Among them is the securing of rights to land for indigenous communities, including the implementation of land rights agreements already made by the Government. Also is the consideration of additional groups to be included in the official listing of indigenous nationalities.

Finally, the Special Rapporteur welcomed the initial progress made by the Government of Nepal in the early stages of the current political transition, and he expressed his eagerness to cooperate and remain actively engaged within the context of the mandate to promote the human rights of indigenous peoples that was conferred to him by the United Nations Human Rights Council.



MINUSTAH's Nepalese Battalion II visiting students at the National School of Cazeau, in Tabarre of Haiti. Photo: MINUSTAH

Tabarre, 4 December: In addition to their security efforts, peacekeepers from Nepal serving with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) initiate humanitarian actions for the benefit of people in disadvantaged areas. On 4 December, MINUSTAH's Nepalese Battalion II visited students at the National School of Cazeau, in Tabarre, near the Haitian capital Port-au-Prince.

The Nepalese peacekeepers handed out shoes and school supplies to 50 individual students, as well as donated sporting equipment, a television and DVD player for use by all at the school. According to Adam Dorzin, the head of the school, "The donation of these electronic devices was very timely. We will use them to screen educational films for children. But they will also be used for play, which many children can't do at home." In addition, the Nepalese contingent has promised to help with ongoing efforts to build a playground at the school. Welcoming the gesture of Nepalese soldiers, Adam Dorzin said: "It is one of the few times where foreign partners are distributing things in this school. I really appreciate this gesture. The children are happy."

The Commander of Nepalese Battalion II, Lieutenant Colonel Sushil Kumar Bhandary, promised that "these activities will continue so that the population can benefit. They will not only take place Tabarre where our peacekeepers are working together with the municipality, but also Pétion-Ville, Delmas Kenscoff and other municipalities in our area of responsibility."

This distribution is not an isolated action. The Nepalese peacekeepers conduct frequent humanitarian activities -- such as providing free medical checks and medicines -- in schools, orphanages and prisons.

MINUSTAH's Nepalese contingent has been deployed in Haiti since 2004. There are currently 1,078 Nepalese blue-helmets serving with the peacekeeping mission.



Nepalese peacekeepers honoured in Liberia. Photo: UNMIL

Liberia, 15 December: Monrovia, Liberia - UN Envoy Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj awarded United Nations peacekeeping medals to the Nepalese contingent serving with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In her speech at the medal ceremony, Ms. Løj said that in the challenges in strengthening the rule of law in Liberia, UNMIL still needs a committed police force to continue to build the capacity of the Liberia National Police (LNP).

"Building sustainable peace in Liberia is at the core of our mandate. And empowering Liberians to do so is our goal," she said as she commended the Nepalese blue-helmets for efforts to support the Liberia LNP and for their commitment to humanitarian outreach to communities. The contingent has undertaken medical outreach programmes as well as building bridges and roads in Liberia. "These will all have an impact on Liberians as they strive for the development of Liberia," the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) added.

She urged the Nepalese awardees and all other UNPOL to "continue working hard to ensure that the Liberian police force develop the confidence they need to take up the baton as UNMIL departs. Your presence will still be necessary to ensure that Liberia remains safe and secure, while the society is being stabilized."

Attending the ceremony, among others, were Lieutenant General ATM Zahirul Alam, UNMIL Force Chief of Staff Commander Brig.Gen E C Quist, UNPOL Commissioner, Mr. Henrik Stiernblad, Director of Mission Support, Mr. Stephen Lieberman, Commander Shrestha, Nepal Formed Police Unit 1 Commander Kunwar, Nepal Formed Police Unit 2, and Commander Adhikari, Nepal Military Police.

Nepal is the fifth largest contributor of troops and police to United Nations peacekeeping, with nearly 4,000 uniformed personnel serving worldwide.

Narayan Tole: A Model Squatter in WATSAN Aspect



Constructing septic tank with up-flow bio-filters. Photo: UNHABITAT



Constructed septic tank with up-flow bio-filters. Photo: UNHABITAT



Community of Naran Tole discussing about septic tank. Photo: UNHABITAT

Kathmandu, December: "Everytime when the issue of river pollution is mentioned, people generally blame squatters," said Sudip Pulami, secretary of Narayan tole Improvement Committee and added that their community has taken an initiative to manage waste generated from the community within their own settlement. He believes that this practice could be a good example to change public mindset about squatters.

Until a year ago, pungent smell emanating from the polluted Samakhushi River flowing nearby community was causing environmental pollution. Transmissible diseases like diarrhoea, eye sore and dysentery was quite common in the community. Goodness, the squatters soon realised that the habit of open defecation and untreated toilet waste was the major problem creator. They sought help from I/NGOs to get rid of these maladies. Soon, UN-HABITAT, WaterAid Nepal and LUMANTI appeared with technical and financial support to improve sanitation condition in the community.

Two "Septic tank with up-flow bio-filters" were built with this support. Each tank has two compartments separated by a bio-filter that segregates solid waste in the lower chamber allowing liquid waste to pass into the upper chamber. Solid waste left behind decomposes in time, which is used as fertilizer.

"Earlier, most of the squatters used to defecate out in the open at night in the lack of their own private toilets. The handful of households had private toilets, which were also discharging untreated waste into the river," said Gita Devi Dhakal, one of the squatters.

Fifteen toilets were constructed in last one year to facilitate every households. Sewer line was laid to connect all the toilets to the septic tanks, which discharge only clean water into the river.

The community has also been privileged with water facility by installing three new taps in the community and 5000 litre storage tank. Five existing public taps have also been repaired to ease community people getting tap water.

These infrastructural developments have ended WATSAN problems in Narayan Tole. The squatters are aware on health and hygiene. They consume only safe drinking water and manage their solid waste by themselves, which has established it as a model among other squatters' settlements.

New website within the UN System

- 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (<http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2008>)
- 2008 ECOSOC resolutions (<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/docs/res2008.asp>)
- Charter of the United Nations – new website (<http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter>)
- New Civil Society Participation Database (<http://esango.un.org/civilsociety/login.do>)
- Children and armed conflict in Afghanistan (S/2008/695) (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/2008/695>)
- Children and armed conflict in the DR of the Congo (S/2008/693) (<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/2008/693>)

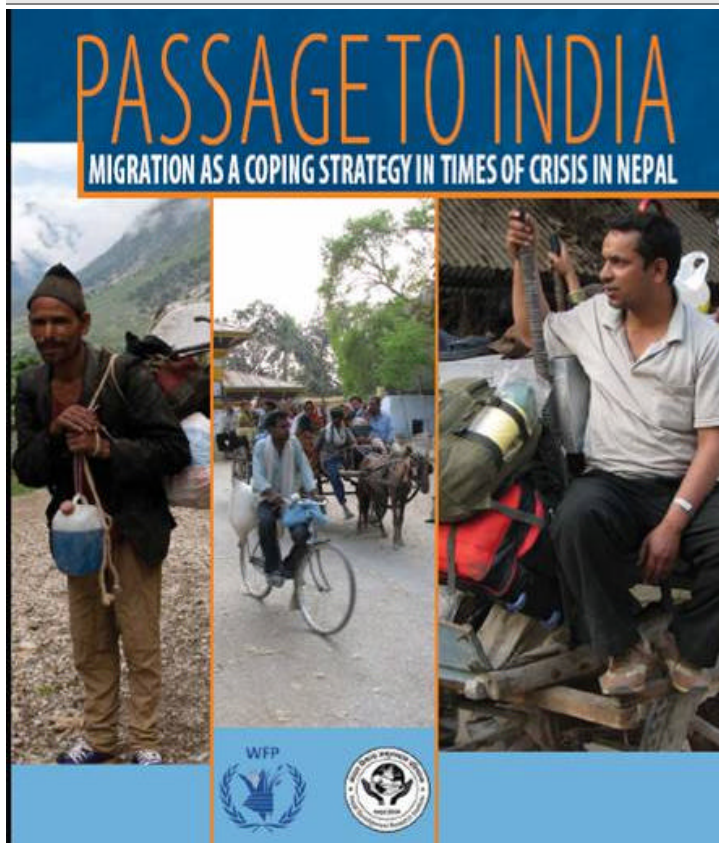


Photo: UNHABITAT

Kathmandu December: Media can play vital role in information dissemination and social development. But in the developing countries like Nepal, development issues have found insignificant priority in the mainstream journalism.

Realizing this fact, a two-day training on Effective Media Communication Skills was organized for Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) professionals in Kathmandu on 18th/19th December 2008. UN-HABITAT Water for Asian Cities (WAC) Programme Nepal and GUTHI organized the training to boost up media communication skills of communication officers of WAC Partners.

Mr. Triratna Manandhar, Chief Trainer briefed the participants on various strategies to deal with media and provided the tips to maintain good relation with media. The training focused on building effective media communication skills of the participants.

Senior newspaper editors, radio and TV journalists also shared their experiences with the participants as resource persons during the training. Mr. Hari Bahadur Thapa, Editor of Kantipur Daily, advised the participants to present their information in an innovative way for effective media coverage. He told that media always prioritize accurate, balanced, credible and reliable issues. Mr. Badri Tiwari, Editor of Nepal Samacharpatra; Mr. Nabin Aryal from Gorkha FM and Mr. Shreeram Paudel from Image Television oriented the participants on different aspects of journalism.

Mr. Pawan Joshi, Documentation Assistant of UN-HABITAT mentioned about www.urbwatsan.org.np, a website developed to circulate urban WATSAN issues and activities. Highlighting on the importance of communication skill, Mr. Prakash Amatya, Coordinator of Fresh Water Network-Nepal said that the organizations should select an appropriate media to deliver the information to target groups. Director of GUTHI, Mr. Anil Sthapit suggested to implement the skills learnt in the training in action to disseminate information through media. He also advised the participants to share WATSAN information regularly with media.

Kathmandu, December: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Nepal Development Research Institute (NDRI) jointly released, "Passage to India, Migration as a coping strategy in times of crisis in Nepal".

The research shows that food insecurity, limited economic opportunities and natural disasters are the underlying factors of migration, especially to India. Although labour migration has been an established coping strategy for the poor, working migrants and their families are increasingly at risk of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

The report found that migration can be reduced if there were employment opportunities that paid NRs 1,200 (US\$16) per month. Activities such as food for work, or cash for work opportunities during agricultural off-seasons also reduces the need for migration.

Copies of the report, including a Nepali version, may be obtained from the WFP office in Patan Dokha, 554-2607. The report may also be downloaded via the WFP website at <http://docustore.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ena/wfp194034.pdf>



From left: Dr. Alexander Spachis, Charge d'affaires, Delegation of the European Commission to Nepal; Ms. Shubha Kayastha, FPAN Youth Volunteer; Ms. Ugochi Daniels, UNFPA Representative, a. i.; H.E. Ambassador Finn Thilsted, Embassy of Denmark; Dr. Dirgh Singh Bam, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Population.

Photo: UNFPA

Kathmandu, 1 December: The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched on 1 December, 2008 two projects through which most vulnerable populations of Nepal can expect to receive immediate services. One is an 18-month long project funded by the Danish Embassy to improve the reproductive health status of populations in Kailali, Dadeldhura, Bajhang, Salyan and Jajarkot districts. The other project, funded by the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO), provides emergency reproductive health services to conflict affected populations in Mid Western Nepal.

UN Events Calendar (January 2009)

27 January: International Day Of Commemoration In Memory Of The Victims Of Holocaust

27 January was chosen to be International Holocaust Remembrance Day as it marks the day on which the largest Nazi death camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau (Poland) was liberated by the Soviet army in 1945. Website: <http://www.un.org/holocaustremembrance>

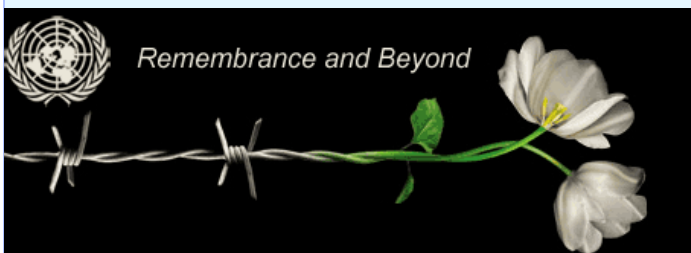


Photo: UNIC



UN Resource Materials

UNIC Kathmandu Online (<http://kathmandu.unic.org>)

UN Nepal

ADB

<http://www.adb.org>

FAO

<http://www.fao.org>

ILO

<http://www.ilo.org>

IMF

<http://www.imf.org>

OHCHR

<http://nepal.ohchr.org>

OCHA

<http://www.un.org.np>

UNAIDS

<http://www.unaids.org>

UNCDF

<http://www.uncdf.org/nepal>

UNDP

<http://www.undp.org.np>

UNESCO

<http://www.unesco.org/kathmandu>

UNFPA

<http://www.unfpanepal.org>

UN-HABITAT

<http://www.unhabitat.org>

UNHCR

<http://www.unhcr.org>

UNIC

<http://kathmandu.unic.org>

UNICEF

<http://www.unicef.org>

UNIFEM

<http://www.unifem.org>

UNMIN

<http://www.unmin.org.np>

UNODC

<http://www.unodc.org>

UNV

<http://www.unv.org>

WB

<http://www.worldbank.org>

WFP

<http://www.wfp.org>

WHO

<http://www.nep.searo.who.int>

Comments or Suggestions

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UNIC Catalogue

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URL: http://kathmandu.unic.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=80&Itemid=73



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